

The Arian Controversy

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the fabled Symplegades, came into violent collision with each other. Nay, some were so far transported beyond the bounds of reason as to be guilty of reckless and outrageous conduct and even to insult the statues of the Emperor."

Constantine felt obliged to intervene and addressed a long letter to Alexander and Arius, which he confided to the care of his spiritual adviser, Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, bidding him go to Alexandria in person and do what he could to mediate between the disputants. We need not give the text in full. Constantine began with his usual exordium. His consuming passion, he said, was for unity of religious opinion, as the precursor and best guarantee of peace. Deeply disappointed by Africa, he had hoped for better things from "the bosom of the East/' whence had arisen the dawn of divine light. Then he continues:

"But Ah! glorious and Divine Providence, what a wound was inflicted not alone on my ears but on my heart, when I heard that divisions existed among yourselves, even more grievous than those of Africa, so that you, through whose agency I hoped to bring healing to others, need a remedy worse than they. And yet, after making careful enquiry into the origin of these discussions, I find that the cause is quite insignificant and entirely disproportionate to such a quarrel* . . . I gather then that the present controversy originated as follows. For when you, Alexander, asked each of the

* *ayav svrshtfs Hai ovSajtcoS d&a ryj*